

1 APPARATUS FOR SHARP IMPLEMENT TRANSFER,
2 COUNTING AND TEMPORARY DISPOSAL OR STORAGE

3 This application is a continuation-in-part of
4 application Serial No. 09/847,969, filed May 2, 2001, *now abandoned,*
5 which application claims the priority of U.S. Provisional
6 Application No. 60/203,363, filed May 10, 2000.

7 DESCRIPTION

8 TECHNICAL FIELD

9 The invention relates to an improved design for a
10 container which is a health care safety product designed
11 to help protect against accidental injury during the
12 passage of sharp instruments; i.e., suture needles and
13 scalpels within the performance of any surgical
14 procedure. It does not involve direct patient contact.

15 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

16 There are approximately 500,000 to 800,000 needle
17 stick injuries reported each year regarding healthcare
18 professionals in the United States. Other than in the
19 patient's room, these accidents occur most often in the
20 operating room. As a result of this significant health
21 hazard, health device manufacturers have developed
22 various products designed to protect healthcare
23 professionals. These items include retractable syringes,
24 "sharps" containers, syringe covers, syringe guards, etc.
25 While needle sticks associated with syringes account for
26 an
27 estimated 75% of the problem, it is estimated that most
28 of the remaining 25% are the result of sticks associated
29 with suturing during surgical procedures or during the
30 unprotected passing of these sharps. It is this niche
31 which has not been adequately addressed by suture
32 manufacturers who have left it up to the discretion of
33 the end user to provide their own protection.